

## Report

### Cooperative Leadership Event (CLE)

September 26-30, 2016, Lilongwe, Malawi



On Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, his excellency the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives of Malawi, Honorable Joseph Mwanamveka MP officially closed the 2<sup>nd</sup> CLE for this 2016, which was held at the Malawian Institute of Management (MIM) in Lilongwe.

As usual, the CLE was designed and meant to:

- Strengthen the leadership and management of Malawian agricultural cooperatives (**agri-coops**) and farmer organizations (**FOs**), as well as the understanding of cooperative enterprises among local University students.
- Collect new, detailed and quality data on Malawian agri-coops and FOs.
- Facilitate professional networking among the leaders, managers and stakeholders of Malawian agri-coops and FOs.
- Emphasize key decision-making processes, taking place both in the public and private sectors, and propose strategies to support, influence and enforce them.

The CLE was organized through a broad-based partnership among these 16 institutions:



The CLE recorded an average participation of 175 persons per day, including:

- 120 leaders and managers of 120 Malawian agri-coops and farmer organizations.
- 12 MSc and PhD students from multiple Malawian Universities
- 53 representatives of partnering institutions (including NGOs, Donor Agencies, International Organizations, National Farmer Unions and Private Companies), as well as from the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade.

The total cost of the CLE is estimated at approx. 60,000 USD:

- 20,000 USD paid by the EDC consortium made of OCDC, CTA, OCFAM-GB and CIAT, to cover costs related to catering, renting the conference room, hiring 5 students, printing out material (name tags, attendance certificates, etc.), liaising with partners and providing administrative support.
- 30,000 USD paid by the GIZ and FAO offices in Malawi, to cover costs incurred for mobilizing 87 coop leaders and managers, hiring 7 students, printing out material (questionnaires, banner, etc.), liaising with partners and government, and providing administrative support.
- 10,000 USD by NCBA-CLUSA, USADF and OXFAM-Malawi, to mobilize 33 cooperative leaders and managers (15, 10 and 8 respectively).

All the other partner institutions made in-kind contributions to the event:

- Before the event they reached out and enlisted coop leaders and managers, and promoted and facilitated their mobilization.
- During the event they sent in delegates to attend and facilitate the various sessions, and to give keynote presentations.
- After the event they are expected to promote and facilitate the dissemination of the knowledge acquired by participants within Malawian agri-coops and FOs.

## Day 1: Introduction and Data Collection

As they arrived at the venue the leaders and managers of Malawian agri-coops and FOs were seated around 12 tables. Each table corresponded to one or two partner institutions and included at least one staff member per institution (the “**co-facilitator**”), 10 coop/FO leaders and managers collaborating with and mobilized by the partner institution(s), as well as a MSc or PhD student from a local University (the “**assistant**”).

First, the coop/FO leaders and managers were asked and helped by the assistants and co-facilitators to fill in an “Entry Test” aiming to assess their leadership and management capacity. The same test was then repeated on the last day to ascertain the knowledge changes generated by the various content and activities of the event.

Second, Mr. Prince Kapondamgaga the CEO of Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), gave an opening speech on behalf of all apex institutions of Malawian rural and agricultural cooperatives and farmer organizations, such as MUSCCO, MAFECO and NASFAM (see photo below). He called for a change in mind-set and a shift from subsistence agriculture to agri-business. He emphasized the unique opportunity provided by the CLE to promote and facilitate mutual learning among the leaders and managers of 120 rural organizations over 5 days. This opening speech was followed by introductory remarks from CTA, regarding the objectives, expectations, agenda and content of the event.



The rest of the day involved group/table work, during which co-facilitators and assistants helped the coop/FO leaders and managers to fill in a 20 pages questionnaire about the structure, conduct, performance and environment of their organizations. The data generated in this way will add to the EDC dataset on African agri-coops and FOs to be used to perform specific organizational diagnostics for Malawi and compared them with similar analyses from other African countries.



## **Day 2: Interactive Training**

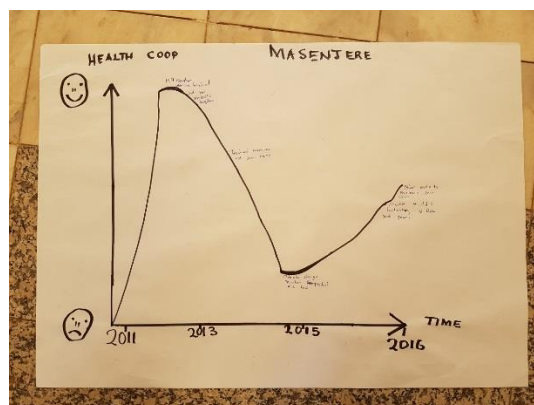
All participants, still divided into 12 groups/tables (as on day one), were engaged in a day long training session led by CTA and based on the “Cooperative life Cycle Framework”. This session involved five brief presentations by Dr. Francesconi, lecture-style, of about 20 minutes each. Each presentation was designed to introduce and explain key concepts regarding the “Cooperative Life Cycle Framework”. These concepts were defined on the basis of both theoretical and empirical research and explained on the basis of “real life” experiences and anecdotes. At the end of each presentation the participants were asked a few questions to help them acquire the concepts presented by relating them to their own experiences. First, each participant was asked to discuss each question with the person seating next to him/her and then also with the rest of their group/table. A participant per table was finally asked to report discussions and answers in a plenary session.



### Day 3: Knowledge Exchange and Coaching

12 new groups/tables were organized, in order to mix up participants and favour knowledge exchange across partner institutions.

First, all the leaders and managers of agri-coops and FOs were asked and helped by the assistants and co-facilitators to draw the life cycles of their organizations.



Second, each life cycle was discussed in groups. Group discussions were moderated by the co-facilitators and recorded by the assistants.



Finally, group discussions were analysed and summarized by one coop/FO leader or manager per group, with the support of co-facilitators and assistants.



## **Day 4: Strategic Debate and Networking**

Day 4 was designed as an “open day”, in which participants were given a chance to meet and discuss with key stakeholders and decision-makers from both the public and private sectors. First, this interaction was structured around three consecutive panel sessions on: public cooperative policy, public-private partnerships for cooperative development and cooperative finance. These sessions were organized as in a conference setting, allowing participants to seat wherever they preferred.



Panel sessions were followed by an outdoor fair, to allow participants to move around freely to meet and discuss more with the panellists, as well as with other public and private stakeholders. Finally, assistants, co-facilitators and selected coop leaders/managers met once again to finalize the summary and conclusions of the group discussions held on the previous day.

## **Day 5: Debriefing, Resolutions and Closing Ceremony**

First, two coop leaders were presented the summary and conclusions finalized the day before in a plenary session, in order to solicit and obtain the final feedback of all participants.

Second, students and co-facilitators asked and helped coop/FO representatives to fill in an exit test (identical to the entry test on day one).

At 11am the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives arrived at the venue. The two selected coop leaders presented their summary and conclusions for the event, as well as their recommendations or the way forward. Then NASFAM's CEO Dyborn Chibonga, a representative of the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives respectively reacted to the presentations made by the two coop leaders and gave closing speeches about the way forward. Here are the key resolutions from this debate:

- 1) The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives of Malawi is in the process to revise the national cooperative legislation and policy, and to establish a cooperative bank. The network brought together by this CLE includes many committed and capable researchers, donors, private companies, NGOs, coop leaders and managers, who ought to be directly involved in these decision-making processes. The Minister publicly committed to involve key representatives of this network - from FAO, GIZ, FUM, MUSCCO and NASFAM – so as to work together to jointly produce a new cooperative legislation and policy, and establish a new cooperative bank for Malawi.
- 2) The cooperative leaders and managers asked the Minister to work together to establish “centres of excellence” for cooperative education. The Minister publicly endorsed this request and committed to support the CLE's network in this effort. MUSCCO and MAFECO are expected to take the lead with the support of EDC and all the other partners involved in the event. According to the coop leaders and managers these centres should also serve to keep organizing CLEs on a yearly basis.
- 3) EDC committed to support both ACE (a private company facilitating commodity exchange in Malawi) and USADF (an American public development fund) to improve and evaluate the impact of their investment strategies in support of Malawian agricultural cooperatives.

Finally, the Minister of Trade and the CEO of NASFAM handed out certificates of attendance to all participants. The event was concluded with a group photo and a cocktail-party.

Closing Session, from left to right:

CTA, NASFAM, Minister of Trade, Registrar of Cooperatives, FAO, GIZ



Closing speech by the Minister



The Minister of Trade hands out certificates of attendance to participants





NASFAM's CEO hands out certificates of attendance to participants



Certificate of attendance



Group photo

